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The Evangelical
School of Theology

Oxford

and

Its place in National History.

An Introductory Lecture

BY

J. A. R. MARRIOTT, M.A.,

Lecturer and Tutor in Modern History at Worcester College, Oxford;
Secretary to the University Extension Delegacy.

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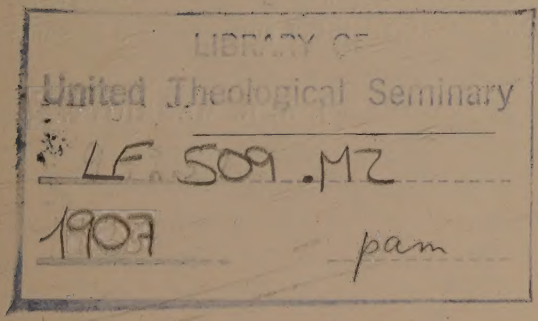

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following pages contain the substance — somewhat expanded—of a lecture delivered as an introduction to a course on "Oxford and its place in National History."

In the preparation of it I have incurred and desire to acknowledge obligations to many writers—pre-eminently to my colleague Mr. J. Wells (*Oxford and its Colleges*, *Degree Ceremony*, &c.); to Mr. C. Headlam (*Oxford*: Mediæval Towns Series); to Boase's *Oxford* (Historic Towns), and Brodrick's *History of the University of Oxford*. A further list of authorities will be found in the Appendix.

J. A. R. MARRIOTT.

OXFORD AND ITS PLACE IN NATIONAL HISTORY.

Among the cities of England, Oxford holds, by general consent, a unique place. Many other towns are in particular aspects more important; other towns have played in this age or in that a more conspicuous part in national history; some towns are older and many are bigger. York, for example, Chester and Bath, were proud cities when the site of Oxford was a swamp, the happy hunting ground of wolves ('Wolvercote') and boars. Canterbury endowed with incomparable sanctity has a place in the spiritual life of England to which no other town can pretend. Winchester and Gloucester, Norwich and Bristol, Plymouth and Southampton, Manchester and Birmingham—each of these has its own significance, political, military or economic; each represents an important phase in the evolution of the English nation. But Oxford's position is none the less unchallenged and apart. No other town presents, in the same degree, an epitome of the story of England, no other town affords in the same sense a microcosm of English history, no other town (London, of course, always excepted) links age to age so faithfully, or tells so eloquently the tale of the unbroken continuity of our political, social and religious life. There is in fact no great period of English history—at least since Roman days—which does not find visible and notable illustration in the Oxford of to-day.

§ 1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE TOWN.

Its name points unmistakably to its origin. Oxford stands where it stands to-day primarily owing to geographical and geological considerations. Occupying a central position in the very heart of England, it first comes into view as a border town on the confines of Mercia and Wessex, a station on the trunk lines of communication. It guards not only the great highway of the Thames, but two main roads—the one running North and South, the other East and West; the roads intersect to-day at Carfax (*Quadrifurcus*). Nor was the meeting of the highways fortuitous. We owe it to the fact that between Binsey and Grandpont (Folly Bridge) the stream of the Thames flows over a firm bed of gravel, and that here, in consequence, the cattle drovers could ford the stream. On the gravel spit rising between Thames and Cherwell modern Oxford is built.

To this initial geographical advantage religious associations were soon added. However much of legend may intermingle with history in the romantic story of St. Frideswide, the indisputable fact remains that here you have a nunnery founded in the Eighth century on the spot where your Cathedral Church stands to-day. St. Frideswide's shrine must always possess the most sacred and most hallowed associations for any loyal son of Oxford; for there is the protoplasm of our spiritual and in a sense of our civic life.

To the celebrity of Oxford as a shrine was soon added importance as a fortress.

An entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (912) makes it clear that early in the Tenth century Oxford was already looked upon as an important town. "In the year 912 died Ethelred Ealdorman of the Mercians, and King Edward took to himself Lundenbyrg and Oxnaford and all the lands that were obedient thereto." Its

strategical importance is sufficiently attested by its significant association with London. That entry in the Chronicle really means that an important step had been taken towards the political unification of middle England by the West Saxon annexation of the lower Thames valley—roughly, Oxfordshire and Middlesex. To the same wise King, Edward the Elder, we owe the great mound which for a century guarded the approach to Oxford from the West and formed the nucleus of the later Norman Castle. These stockaded mounds or 'burhs' are the characteristic feature of the military policy of Edward the Elder and his sister Ethelfleda, the lady of the Mercians. All Mercia N.E. of Watling Street was still Danish—secured to the Danes by Alfred's Treaty of Wedmore (878). South-Western Mercia was still subject to their devastating raids again and again renewed. It was the great work of Edward the Elder to bind Mercia firmly to Wessex, and this he accomplished by constructing a series of burhs or fortified mounds at important strategical points. Thus the burhs round which Hertford grew up guarded the ford over the Lea; Oxford that over the Thames; Tamworth guarded an important junction not only of rivers (Anker and Thame) but of roads; Stafford—which is counted "the most important strategical point of middle Britain"*—was fortified in order to block "all access to the upper Trent," while Chester similarly "blocked all that passed over the Dee."† Other burhs there were 'timbered' by Edward and Ethelfleda, but I have mentioned enough to indicate the importance of Oxford as forming a link in the long chain of fortified towns, by which one of the greatest 'makers of England' sought to hold back the Danish inroads and to consolidate middle and Western England under his own immediate rule.

* Green: *Conquest of England*, p. 224. † *Ibid.*

Oxford, then, comes into being as a meeting-point of highways—by river and road, as a venerated shrine, and as a frontier fortress, forming an important link in a great strategical chain.

Its growing importance in a military sense is unpleasantly indicated by the frequency with which, during the century preceding the Norman Conquest, it was attacked by the Danes. Not less than four times were its wooden houses burnt to the ground, in 979, in 1002, in 1010 and in 1032. In 1002 it was the English who were the aggressors. In that year, so the Chronicle tells us, Athelred the Redeless, by a sudden access of terror-stricken energy, "ordered all the Danish men who were in England to be slain on St. Bricius's Day, because the king was informed that they wished to plot against his life and afterwards against the life of all his Witan, and so to have the kingdom easily for themselves." In Oxford, the Danes fled for refuge to St. Frideswide's minster, and held the tower against the English. Failing to dislodge them, the citizens burnt the Church and its tower to the ground. In 1010 we read that "the army of the Danes leaving their ships, go to Oxford through the woods of Chiltern, and sack the town and set it on fire," and in 1013 that "after Swegen came over Watling Street they (the Danes) wrought the most evil that any army could do. He then went to Oxford and the townspeople immediately submitted and gave hostages; and thence to Winchester and they did the same."

But the central and commanding situation of the town not only afforded peculiar temptations to the Danish invaders; it suggested its appropriateness as a *locale* for important political gatherings. No less than four great Gemôts, or national councils, were held here in the Eleventh century. It was the scene of the Gemôt held in 1015, after the restoration of King Ethelred, when the

great Mercian Earl Edric traitorously slew Sigeferth and Morkere, the thanes of the five Danish Boroughs. Five years later (1020) there was an historic gathering at Oxford called to witness the reconciliation of English and Dane under Cnut. Here again was the meeting in 1035 called to decide the question of the succession to the kingdom on Cnut's death. Soon after Cnut's death (at Shaftesbury, Nov. 12, 1035) there was "a meeting of all the wise men at Oxford; and Earl Leofric and almost all the thanes north of Thames and the sailors of London chose Harold to the government of all England, him and his brother Harthacnut, who was in Denmark. And Earl Godwine and all the chief men of Wessex were against it as long as they could, but they could not prevail aught against it." Thus did Mercia prevail against Wessex, and at Oxford, therefore, it was fitting that Harold Harefoot should be crowned. There, too, he died. Finally, at Oxford was held the great gemôt of 1065—just before the death of Edward the Confessor—when Wessex once more surrendered to the claims of Mercia and its Earls. But the importance of the place before the Norman Conquest has been sufficiently illustrated.

The Conquest opens a new scene in the history of Oxford as of England. By the time Domesday Survey was made Oxford presented a sorry picture: of its 721 houses only 243 were geldable—or liable to rates—no less than 478 were in ruins, so that "Oxford paid for toll and gable and all other customs yearly—to the King twenty pounds and six measures of money, and to Earl Algar ten pounds besides his mill." But it could already boast eight Churches. How, when, and by whom Oxford was reduced to ruins there is not sufficient evidence to show: perhaps by the Northumbrians in 1065, less probably by the Normans. William the Conqueror committed Oxford to the keeping of one of his barons, Robert D'Oigli, whom he

married to one of the daughters and heiresses of Wiggod of Wallingford. D'Oigli soon got to work, and not a little of his work survives to this day. The building of the Castle was begun in 1071, and three years later that of the Church of St. George within the Castle. Hythe Bridge, the oldest of Oxford bridges, we owe to him and his house; as well as the tower of St. Michael's, the doorway of St. Ebbe's, the chancel arch of St. Cross, Holywell, and the crypt and chancel of St. Peter's in the East. True it is that for the monument of D'Oigli—first Norman ruler of Oxford—you have only to look around.

Before we leave the Norman Conquest, another entry in Domesday demands a passing notice. "All burgesses of Oxford hold in common a pasture without the wall which brings in 6*s.* 8*d.*" That great meadow known as Port or Town Meadow is still held in common by the freemen of Oxford, and there you may still see their cattle grazing as they grazed when D'Oigli reigned.

To Robert D'Oigli the Second—or rather to the importunities of his wife, prompted by her confessor,—Oxford owed that which for 300 years was its chief ecclesiastical glory and pride. In 1129 he founded the great Augustinian Priory of Osney, soon afterwards raised to the dignity of an Abbey, and rebuilt on a still more splendid scale in 1247. Of that stately Abbey not a single material trace—except the bells transferred to Christ Church and one ruined doorway—remains. On the dissolution of the abbeys, Osney became the seat of the new bishopric founded by Henry the Eighth, and its last abbot, Robert King, was the first Bishop of the new diocese. But, four years later (1546) the Bishop's stool was transferred to the Priory of St. Frideswide's, now become the Cathedral Church of Christ.

But to return to Norman days. Henry I added fresh dignity to Oxford by building just outside the North Gate the palace of Beaumont as a royal residence. Traces of

the palace survived well into the Nineteenth century, and its memory is still commemorated by the name given to the street built upon its site. The palace itself was granted by Edward II to the Carmelite Friars, who used it partly as a residence and partly as a place of education for the members of their order. From the ruins of the convent, Laud is said to have obtained much of the material with which he enlarged the library and built the new quadrangle of St. John's College. Gloucester Green, the open space to the South-East of Worcester College, is part of the old park of the palace of Beaumont. In that palace Queen Eleanor—Henry II's wife—resided frequently, and there Richard Cœur de Lion was born. His younger brother John was born in the King's hunting seat at Woodstock.

Other evidences of the favour shown by the Norman and Angevin Kings are not lacking. Henry I founded and Henry II additionally endowed the Hospital of St. Bartholomew—about a mile outside the East Gate—for twelve brothers and a chaplain, with a leper house close by. Edward III gave the Hospital to Adam de Brome as a refuge in times of plague within the city for the students of his recently founded college of Oriel; but from that day to this the Hospital, remains of which still stand, has been a bone of contention between the City and the College. Henry II granted by Charter to his "citizens of Oxenford" all laws and customs and laws and quittances" which they enjoyed under Henry I, "and specially their Guild-merchant"; and further: "to be quit of toll and passenger tax, and every custom through all England and Normandy, by land, by water, by sea-coast, by land, and by strand," and to have "all other customs and liberties and laws of their own which they have in common with my citizens of London." Richard I gave the town a municipal corporation—a Mayor and two Aldermen, with the further

privilege that the Mayor should act as butler at the Coronation Feast—a privilege still enjoyed.

Of many picturesque incidents in the early history of the city, as for example the siege of Oxford Castle in the Civil Wars of Stephen and the escape of the Empress Maud over the frozen river to Wallingford—I can say nothing; but I have said enough to emphasize its importance in days long before it became known as a seat of learning. As frontier town, as venerated shrine, as fortified burh, as gemôt place both before and after the Conquest, as Norman fortress, as royal residence, as the seat of Priory and Abbey, as a famous market and possessor of a Merchant Guild,—Oxford was a famous city before it was the home of a still more famous university. On this point J. R. Green, himself an Oxford citizen as well as an Oxford student, is particularly emphatic :— "The University of Oxford is so far from being older than the City, that Oxford had already seen five centuries of borough life before a student appeared within its streets. The University found it a busy, prosperous borough, and reduced it to a cluster of lodging-houses. It found it among the first of English municipalities, and it so utterly crushed its freedom that the recovery of some of the commonest rights of self-government has only been brought about by recent legislation. The story of the struggle which ended in this usurpation is one of the most interesting in our municipal annals, and it is one which has left its mark not on the town only, but on the very constitution and character of the conquering University."

§ 2. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY.

I pass to the beginnings of the University.

We must, I am afraid, discard the pleasing myth that we owe our foundation to the sagacity and prescience of

King Alfred. That myth was mainly based upon a forgery inserted in the Sixteenth century in a MS. of Asser's *Life of Alfred*, and was originally due to a not unworthy object—a desire to prove the superior antiquity of the University of Oxford over the University of Cambridge. That superiority is an historical fact ; but the Cambridge antiquaries—not to be outdone either in antiquity or ingenuity, produced the copy of a charter granted by King Arthur. As a matter of fact there are no traces of Schools in Oxford before the Twelfth century. Early in that century, Theobald of Etampes gathered round him a band of scholars, and a little later teachers like Robert Pullen, the famous theologian, and Vacarius, an Italian Doctor of Civil Law, did the same. But a few isolated teachers, even though surrounded by eager students, do not constitute a University. There is, however, indisputable evidence that before the end of the Twelfth century, Oxford was recognized as a University or Studium Generale. The term Studium Generale means not a place or institution where everything is taught, but a school to which scholars from all parts may resort. The term Universitas on the other hand means merely a body of men or a corporation, though by usage it was gradually confined to a corporation or guild of teachers.

Before the end of the Twelfth century such a University was definitely established in Oxford, and the question naturally arises: what had led to its establishment? The answer is still within the arena of controversy, but it is now generally agreed that it was due to a migration of scholars from the famous University of Paris. Such migrations of scholars were not uncommon in the Middle Ages. Sometimes, as in the case of an exodus from Oxford to Stamford and Northampton, it was merely a temporary expedient, sometimes it led to the foundation of new universities. Thus Padua

was founded from Bologna, Oxford from Paris, and Cambridge from Oxford. But what led to this particular migration? In answering that question we touch once again the main stream of English history. Henry II was quarrelling with Archbishop Thomas in regard to clerical immunities, and about the year 1167 the King, with the view it would seem of punishing the partisans of Becket, summoned all English clerks who were studying in France to return immediately to England "as they loved their benefices." Return they did, bringing with them their teachers, and something of the organization under which they had lived in Paris. What definitely attracted them to Oxford it is not possible with certainty to say. But, bearing in mind what I have said, you will agree that the choice, even if not obvious, was not unnatural. Here was a town of quite the first rank, all but a capital; a favourite home of the King; easy of access both by river and road, and yet easily defensible; the seat of noble abbeys and a famous priory; a commercial centre with its merchant guild; already the resort of teachers of repute and many scholars. It is not a matter for surprise that the clerks recalled or expelled (possibly both) from Paris should have established themselves at Oxford. That they did so is at least probable, and thus before the end of the Twelfth century the Universitas, the Studium Generale, struck roots into the soil, roots from which a mighty forest of learning was destined in the coming years to spring.

Of the Guild origin of the University there are still traces in its constitution. A Master's degree, for example, is primarily a licence to teach, and such licence could only be obtained by those who had served the regular seven years' apprenticeship and had been admitted with full ceremony to the mastership of the craft; of this mastership the cap or biretta was the

coveted symbol.* But despite antiquarian research one cannot but sympathize with the sentiment so finely expressed by Mr. Gladstone :—"It always seems as if the word University, soaring above the plane of antiquarian learning, at the least prefigured for itself a very high prerogative, and was fitted, and as it were predestined to convey the idea of its ultimate function, as the treasure-house of all knowledge and the palaestra of universal instruction."†

For nearly a century the University was, as we should now say, "Non-Collegiate," *i.e.*, the students were not members of any College or Hall. Of the modern Collegiate system Walter of Merton's magnificent foundation (1264) marks (despite the claims of University College and Balliol to superior antiquity) the real beginning, for it is, as Mr. Wells has pointed out, "in Merton that the real idea of a College "—as opposed to a mere hostel or alms-house "is first found, and its statutes were the model of subsequent foundations, in both Oxford and Cambridge. . . . This foundation and those which were imitated from it, changed the whole system of English University education; the poor clerks, living on charity, subject to little control, and constantly migrating, who had formed the majority of the early students, now tended more and more to become members of orderly and well endowed corporations. The Universities lost in freedom, but they gained in order and opportunity to study. It is to Walter de Merton that this revolution is due."‡

Having thus glanced at the origins of the City, at the origins of the University, and at the origins of the Collegiate system, let me next take a rapid survey of the part which Oxford,—City, University and Colleges

* See on the meaning of this and other badges, Wells' *Degree Ceremony* (Clarendon Press, 1906).

† *Acad. Sketch*, p. 9. ‡ *Oxford and its Colleges*, p. 75.

—has played in the national history of England, and do something to justify my assertion that in Oxford you have a microcosm of English History.

There is an old gibe which asserts that Oxford only produces 'movements,' while Cambridge produces 'men.' It is more epigrammatic than true. Oxford has certainly been peculiarly fruitful in great movements, but it has not been barren in great men.

§ 3. THE COMING OF THE FRIARS.

Much has been written of late, and written well, on the great religious and social and intellectual movement connected with the Orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic. I need only recall the *Life of St. Francis of Assisi* by M. Paul Sabatier—a work of which it is not too much to say that it has profoundly touched the hearts and imaginations of men throughout the civilized world. Then there is Mr. A. G. Little's erudite volume on the *Grey Friars*, and Dr. Brewer's scholarly introduction to the *Monumenta Franciscana* in the great series issued under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, not to speak of the more popular appeal of Mr. J. R. Green and Dr. Jessop. Of the great movements initiated by St. Francis and St. Dominic, Oxford was in England the centre and home. In England, as in Europe, the mediaeval Church was at the zenith of its power and splendour, but the fruits of religion were hard to come by, and its professors were sunk in luxury and sloth. The Church flourished, but religion was perishing. The Friars sought to save it before it was too late, and to succour those whom Regulars and Seculars, Monks and Parish Priests were materially neglecting and spiritually starving.

The Dominicans or Black Friars first came to Oxford in 1221; the Grey Friars or Brethren of St. Francis three years later; and both received an enthusiastic

welcome from rich and poor. The first home of the Black Friars was in the Jewry—where the Municipal Buildings now stand at the corner of St. Aldate's and Blue Boar Lane; but they soon outgrew their original habitation, and in 1259 they built a new home, schools and church on an island in one of the many streams of Thames at the end of Speedwell Street, formerly known as Preacher's Lane.

To the Franciscans, Henry III in 1244 and again in 1245 made grants of land in the same neighbourhood, which is still reminiscent in its names of that great period in its history. There you still have Black Friars Road, Friar Street, Abbey Place, Paradise Square. Church Place commemorates to-day the Church of the Grey Friars in the neighbourhood of Penson's Gardens; Paradise Square was the Paradisium or Park of the same order in their later and more luxurious days; while the discovery of stone coffins and other remains makes it certain that the present Baptist Chapel in Commercial Road is on the site of the Friars' burying place.

A third order of Friars, the Carmelites or White Friars, reached Oxford in the middle of the Thirteenth century and settled in the neighbourhood of Worcester College. Edward II, as we have seen, gave them Beaumont Palace after his defeat at Bannockburn; their burying place was in or near the present cattle market, while Friars' Entry still commemorates the settlement of the White Friars. Somewhat later in the century (1268) Henry III established the Austin Friars on the site, just outside the Northern wall of the city, now occupied by Wadham College.

But of all these orders, by far the most important in Oxford, as in England, were the Grey Friars or Franciscans. For the details of their work in Oxford I must refer you to Mr. Little's book. Here I will merely recall the fact that with them are closely connected

some of the greatest names of the Thirteenth century. Robert Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln and Chancellor of the University, was their first 'Lector.' His friend Adam de Marsh was another of their teachers, while it was the great Franciscan Schoolmen who in the later Thirteenth and the early Fourteenth centuries "gave to the University a European reputation." I speak, of course, of Duns Scotus (Doctor Subtilis); William of Occam (Doctor Invincibilis et Singularis); and, greatest of all, the man who was once described by Mr. Gladstone as "perhaps the most striking British intellect of the Middle Ages," Roger Bacon (Doctor Mirabilis).

§ 4. THE LOLLARD MOVEMENT.

The next great Oxford movement is that of the Lollards in the Fourteenth century. As to the personal history of John Wyclif there is still considerable obscurity, due partly to the fact that there were at least two, if not three, Wyclifs at Oxford in the middle years of the Fourteenth century. There is, however, no reasonable doubt that John Wyclif the leader of the great Protestant movement of the Fourteenth century was Master of Balliol College (1361), and later on was the representative of the University in the House of Commons. For some twenty years, Wyclif was one of the most active and influential teachers of theology and philosophy in Oxford, and when the day of trial came and he was cited to appear before Archbishop Sudbury and Bishop Courtenay at St. Paul's, he was protected by the University, and was acquitted of heresy by the Theological Faculty.

In its support of Wyclif during the greater portion of his career, the University was thoroughly representative of public opinion in the country at large. So long as he confined himself to attacks upon the Papal primacy

or to denunciation of the evil lives of the clergy, or of the practical abuses in the Church, Wyclif enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the great body of English laymen. But in the last years of his life (1381-1384) he went too far for them, and their support, with that of the University, was summarily withdrawn. An attack upon the Papacy was one thing: an attack upon the fundamental dogmas of the Catholic Church was another. Wyclif's denial of Transubstantiation, not less than his supposed connection with the Revolt of the Peasants in 1381, alienated and even terrified his more conservative friends in Oxford and elsewhere.

Of this conservatism the noblest and most splendid monument in Oxford is the great foundation of William of Wykeham, the King's architect, Bishop of Winchester, and Lord High Chancellor of England.

The first half of the Fourteenth century had witnessed the foundation of three Colleges—Exeter, Oriel and Queen's—but none of these can be said to mark a distinctive epoch in the history either of the University or the nation. The foundation of the New College of St. Mary emphatically does. Its founder, William of Wykeham, takes very high rank among the statesmen ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages. A staunch upholder of the old order, and a strenuous opponent of Wyclif, he saw with sorrow the shrinkage of students in the University and the decimation of the working clergy in the country at large. The French war, and the Great Pestilence of 1349, were responsible for much; the Lollard heresies were, in his view, responsible for more. New College, then, owes its origin primarily to the anxiety of the founder to provide England with a body of parish priests so highly trained in the ancient ways as to withstand the gusts of heretical doctrine. To feed his college in Oxford and to provide his students with sound training from the earliest age

Wykeham founded the great School at Winchester, which marked the beginning of the Public School system.

§ 5. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY—THE OXFORD RENAISSANCE.

During the Fifteenth century England is concerned with four great questions :—(i) ecclesiastically: with the Catholic or Anti-Lollard Reaction; (ii) politically: with the renewal and close of the Hundred Years' War; (iii) socially: with the Wars of the Roses; and (iv) intellectually: with the Revival of Learning. Of the first two we have conspicuous monuments in Oxford; with the third we are not concerned; of the fourth we were the home. Indeed, of all the great movements in English history there is none which can with more confidence be described as an *Oxford* movement than that which is so closely associated with the names of Grocyn, Latimer, and Linacre, of Dean Colet, Erasmus, and Sir Thomas More.

The Fifteenth century falls into two sharply defined, but unequal halves. The first half (1399—1450) is a period if not of reaction at least of return to mediæval ideas, and we see the reflection of this reactionary movement in the foundation of Lincoln and All Souls Colleges. The second half begins about 1490 and extends to the opening of the Reformation Parliament in 1529—rather an elongated century. It is marked in Oxford by the foundation of Corpus Christi College and of Christ Church—colleges which pre-eminently embody the spirit of the New Learning. Between the periods is a gap of forty years—filled by the foundation of St. Mary Magdalen—a college which fitly represents a period of transition. Its founder, William of Waynflete, though in many ways a loyal disciple and

imitator of his master Wykeham, was none the less touched by the hues of the early dawn of the Rennaissance.

The High Church party were among the staunchest of the supporters of the Lancastrian dynasty, brought to the English throne by the Revolution of 1399. And the Lancastrians themselves came in on a wave of conservative reaction. One of their first anxieties, therefore, was to crush out the last remnants of the Lollard 'heresy.' In Oxford Lollardry was still strong. A remarkable document was published by the Chancellor and Masters in 1406 in defence of Wyclif, in consequence of which Archbishop Arundel, himself an Oriel man, determined to make a great effort for the extermination of the heresy in his old University. In 1407 he summoned a provincial council to Oxford and established a strict censorship of the Press; in 1409 he held a visitation in Oxford—despite the strong protests and strenuous opposition of the University, and in 1411 267 propositions drawn from the writings of John Wyclif were condemned and publicly committed to the flames at Carfax. To all outward seeming the good seed planted by Wyclif was violently uprooted; in reality it was destined to rich fruition in the future.

The triumph of the reaction is marked in Oxford by the foundation in 1429 of Lincoln College. The career of its founder, Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, is not untypical. As a young graduate he was a devoted disciple of Wyclif, an ardent reformer, burning with zeal against prevailing abuses in Church and State. Then came the chill of middle age, and a weakening of the generous, if intemperate, enthusiasms of youth; and then, high promotion in the Church, rapidly increasing wealth, and finally nomination to the great Bishopric of Lincoln. By this time Fleming was a determined opponent of Lollardry, and he founded his

College as a veritable fortress for the defence of orthodoxy. It was to be a "Collegiolum quoddam theologorum"—a "little college of students in theology, who would defend the sacred page against those ignorant laics who profaned with swinish snout its most holy pearls."

If Lincoln College represents the Catholic reaction, All Souls is reminiscent of the French War. Its founder, Archbishop Chichele, if not (as Shakespeare teaches)* actually responsible for the renewal of the war in 1415, was undeniably one of the stoutest supporters of Henry V's policy. The primary purpose of the splendid College which he founded in 1438 was to act as a Chantry for the souls of the faithful departed, and particularly of those who had fallen in the French War. "Perhaps," as the present Chichele Professor of Modern History has remarked, "he may have felt some personal remorse when he reflected on his own part in the furthering of the war, but certainly . . . the waste of English lives during the last twenty years lay heavy on his soul."

The foundation of Magdalen College in 1457 marks, as already pointed out, the beginning of the transition to the ideals of a new age. Provision was made for the teaching not only of theology but of moral and metaphysical and natural philosophy. The lectures, moreover, like most of the College lectures of to-day, were to be open not only to the students of Magdalen, but to all members of the University, and it is noticeable that the founder of Corpus Christi College compelled his Bachelor students to attend the Magdalen lectures at 6 a.m.

But it is the special glory of Magdalen at this period that it was the centre of the earlier phases of the Oxford Renaissance. Lily, the famous Latin Grammarian, and Colet's first headmaster at St. Paul's, was a Magdalen man; Colet himself was there, and Wolsey, and (probably) Richard Foxe, the founder of Corpus Christi College.

* *Henry V*, Act i, Sc. 1.

Meanwhile, the Renaissance spirit was manifesting itself in the increasing sumptuousness and splendour of the University buildings. The new Divinity School—perhaps the most beautiful building in Oxford—was opened in 1489, while in the previous year Duke Humphrey of Gloucester's magnificent donation of 600 books had found a home in the room which still bears his name at the Bodleian Library.

With the great movement of the Oxford Renaissance an introductory lecture cannot possibly attempt to deal. It demands at least one lecture to itself. Enough to say here that its inspiring genius was John Colet of Magdalen, and that its spirit is embodied in the foundation of Corpus Christi College, and in the great 'House' of Christ designed by Cardinal Wolsey and founded by his master Henry VIII. There is nothing of which Oxford has more entire reason to be proud than of its predominant share in the intellectual and religious revival at the close of the Fifteenth and the opening of the Sixteenth century. Thanks in large measure to the influence impressed upon that movement by the saintly Colet, the revival of learning in England was from the first closely associated with the idea of religious reform. Hence the striking contrast between the Renaissance in England and in Italy. Colet and his friends, though they looked primarily for reform from within, showed no less courage than Wyclif himself in denunciation of prevailing abuses in the Church. Whether they would have been strong enough to do the work subsequently accomplished by the coarser-fibred men of the Sixteenth century is uncertain. What is certain is that in the later movement Oxford had little part.

§ 6. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

From the days of Archbishop Warham (1504-32) the friend and patron of Colet, Erasmus and More, down to

those of Abbot, every Archbishop of Canterbury, with the one exception of Reginald Pole, was a Cambridge man. The exception is not less significant than the rule; it shows how largely Oxford, in the Sixteenth century, was committed to what we Protestants call the reactionary side. Though she produced Jesuit leaders like Allen and Campion, her method of dealing with the Protestant Reformers was to burn at the stake those whom Cambridge produced.

Cambridge was indeed the home of the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth century; Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer, Browne, Travers, and Cartwright were all Cambridge men. But Oxford witnessed one of the most dramatic scenes of the century: the trial, condemnation, and renunciation of Archbishop Cranmer in St. Mary's,* and there are, I imagine, few spots in Oxford to which the steps of the stranger are more invariably directed than to the monument which commemorates the burning of the Protestant Martyrs.

Another great episode in the Reformation of the Sixteenth century may be abundantly illustrated from Oxford. The dissolution of the monastic houses brought with it, here as elsewhere, both gain and loss. In abolishing St. Frideswide's to provide site and funds for Christ Church, Wolsey did but follow in the steps of such exemplary Churchmen as Wykeham and Waynflete. From the ashes of the still greater houses of Osney and Rewley no such phœnix arose. Gloucester Hall, the ancient home of the Benedictines, was dissolved, and passed into private hands only to reappear two centuries later as Worcester College. St. Bernard's, thanks to the munificence of a London citizen, Sir Thos. White, was re-endowed before the close of the century as St. John's College, and Durham College, thanks to another citizen, Sir Thomas Pope,

* Admirably described by H. L. Thompson: *St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford.*

was resuscitated as Trinity College. But Henry VIII, though he dealt sternly and perhaps avariciously with the monasteries, was no mere iconoclast. A father of the Reformation, he was a son of the Renaissance, and his zeal for learning was genuine. Thus, while the monasteries fell, the University and most of its Colleges were spared. "I tell you, sirs, I judge no land in England better bestowed than that which is given to our Universities. For by their maintenance our land shall be well governed when we be dead and rotten." Such was Henry's spirited reply to those who urged the disendowment of Oxford. His son's reign witnessed the completion of the destructive work of the Reformation, and did far less than is generally supposed towards educational reconstruction.

The Sixteenth century in Oxford, as in England, was a period of violent oscillation. Catholic and Protestant had their turns of triumph. It is worth noting, however, that neither triumph was specifically or characteristically English. The consuming zeal of the Edwardine extremists derived its inspiration from Geneva. The fires of Smithfield were fed by faggots largely imported from Spain. But these extreme oscillations, though un-English in origin, had a characteristically English effect. They prepared the minds of the English people—always inclined to the middle path of compromise — for the Elizabethan settlement. But that compromise, though embodied in statutes in the first year of Elizabeth, had still to be translated into administrative reality and to be interpreted to the minds of the people. That interpretation and translation was primarily the work of three typical sons of Oxford—the philosophic Hooker, the saintly Bishop Andrewes, and William Laud, Chancellor of the University and Archbishop of Canterbury, famous in our country's history as a ruler of the

Church, famous in Oxford as a great University administrator and reformer.

§ 7. THE PURITAN REVOLUTION.

With the mention of these names we plunge into the turmoil and controversy of the Seventeenth century and reach another great period in the history of Oxford and of England. And at no period did the streams of Oxford local history mingle more largely and effectually in the broad river of national history. For here in Oxford you find yourself surrounded by the visible memorials of some of the greatest men of the century. St. John's College is still redolent of Archbishop Laud; the Theatre is due to the munificence, and bears the name of Archbishop Sheldon; close by is the original home of the University Press, which keeps alive the memory of one of the greatest of English historians, Sheldon's friend, Lord Chancellor Clarendon. Nor are the memories all reminiscent of the same party. Sir John Eliot, the first leader of Parliamentary resistance, John Pym and John Hampden, the leaders at a later stage, were all Oxford men; while Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, the great "Apostle of Moderation," kept open house at Great Tew (some sixteen miles from Oxford) for all that was most brilliant in the University society of his day. But the *Convivium Philosophicum* under Falkland's roof, "the college situated in a purer air," "the University in a less volume," have been depicted by the magic pen of Clarendon in words that are immortal.*

In Oxford itself the period of the Seventeenth century was one of exceptional vitality. The opening of Sir Thomas Bodley's famous library represents a benefaction

* *Life and Times of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland,* by the present writer.

not merely to Oxford, but to the world. To the same period belongs the formation of the first museum in England, due to the generosity of Elias Ashmole: the Physic Garden, the first of its kind in England, was established in 1632 on land given for the purpose by Henry, Earl of Danby; while later in the century the Royal Society was nursed into life by John Wilkins, who had been thrust into the Wardenship of Wadham College by his brother-in-law Oliver Cromwell.

Turning back from learning to politics, we find Oxford serving as a relief capital to London when sickness raged, or the Stuart Kings sought to try the effect of an enervating climate upon hot-headed politicians. Thus Parliaments met in Christ Church Hall, both under the first and second Charles. When the strife of tongues gave way to the strife of arms, Oxford became the headquarters of the King, and formed the strategical centre of the first Civil War. Naseby, where the decisive battle was fought, is rather out of range; but Edgehill is only some thirty miles to the North; Cropredy Bridge is in the same district; Newbury, the site of two important battles, is twenty-five miles to the S.S.W.; and Chalgrove Field, fatal to John Hampden, is within a dozen miles to the S.E. When in June, 1646, Oxford surrendered to Sir Thomas Fairfax, the first Civil War was virtually at an end. During the last four years Oxford had almost ceased to wear the aspect of a University: it was converted into a camp and a court. The college plate was melted down to supply the King's necessities, bells were melted down for the casting of ordnance, New College cloister was converted into a magazine, the town itself was made ready to stand a siege, and the King and Queen made Christ Church and Merton their home. After the surrender of the town to Fairfax both it and the University resumed gradually their normal aspect.

During the Parliamentary interregnum Oliver Cromwell himself was our Chancellor, but nowhere were the Stuarts more enthusiastically welcomed when they came into their own again. Finally, when we come to the consummating episode of the century, Oxford again plays a leading part. Nothing did more to precipitate the Revolution of 1688, and to bring about the downfall of the Stuart dynasty, than James II's suicidal attack upon the liberties of the Fellows of Magdalen. I pass lightly over these leading episodes of the Seventeenth century because I mean to speak of them at length hereafter. But enough has been said to prove that the connexion between Oxford on the one hand, and Church and Crown on the other, was exceptionally intimate in the Seventeenth century. That connection suffered a rude shock from the violence of James II.

§ 8. JACOBITES AND HANOVERIANS.

But despite the tyranny of James II and the marked coldness of William III, Oxford remained devotedly attached to Church and Crown after the Revolution. Queen Anne was enthusiastically welcomed by the University in 1702, and although Oxford played no part in the political crisis at the end of her reign, it looked sullenly on at the accession of Hanoverian George.

But while the University sulked, the City rejoiced. As in the Civil War, so after the Revolution, Town and Gown took different sides. While Gownsmen were mostly Tories and High Churchmen, the Townsmen favoured the Whigs and the Dissenters. The antiquary Hearne,* to whom Whig and rascal were convertible terms, tells of many a riot in the early days of the Hanoverian rule. So serious indeed had the outbreaks become that in June, 1715, the government deemed it prudent to proclaim martial law and despatch

* Hearne: *Collections* (Oxford Historical Society).

a force of cavalry to maintain order in the town. Just about the same time George I had purchased the library of Bishop Moore and had presented it to the University of Cambridge. The coincidence suggested two of the most famous epigrams of the Eighteenth century. The Oxford epigram by Dr. Trapp ran thus :—

> "The King, beholding with impartial eyes
> The wants of both his Universities,
> A troop of horse to Oxford sent, for why?
> That learned body wanted loyalty;
> But books to Cambridge gave, as well discerning
> How that right loyal body wanted learning."

Sir William Brown's retort on behalf of Cambridge was both pointed and prompt :—

> "The King to Oxford sent a troop of horse,
> For Tories own no argument but force.
> With equal care to Cambridge books he sent,
> For Whigs allow no force but argument."

Political animosities became so fierce that a Parliamentary statute was actually drafted to suspend the constitution of the University, to provide for the administration of its revenues by a Commission, and to vest the appointment of its officers, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, Heads of Colleges, Fellows and Scholars, in the Crown. Fortunately, the Bill, thanks to the tact of Archbishop Wake, was dropped.

After the middle of the century, especially after the accession of George III, the fierce Jacobitism of Atterbury and Ormond and Hearne, mellowed in Oxford as in England, into the more genial Toryism of Dr. Johnson and Lord North, and later on into the progressive conservatism of Canning and Peel.

To turn from the political to the intellectual life of the University.

It is commonly assumed—perhaps too summarily—that in the Eighteenth century we reached the nadir of inefficiency, dulness, and sloth; that we were tolerant

only of colourless respectability; that we were sterile in the production of great men, and that Oxford, "once open to all Christendom" and the microcosm of the national life, was becoming under the influence of 'tests' and exclusions more and more of a "seminary for the education of Anglican clergy and the country gentry."

There is much truth in the indictment, but it is not the whole truth. Monopoly, it is true, was producing its accustomed fruits; professors and tutors ceased to teach, and undergraduates to learn; the Examination system fell into complete decay and the Degree exercises (as we learn from "Terrae Filius" and Vicesimus Knox) were purely formal; morals were loose and religion was cold. The pictures drawn by eminent Oxonians are not flattering to our self-esteem. Lord Malmesbury, who matriculated in 1763, declared that "the two years of my life I look back to as most unprofitably spent were those I spent at Merton." Gibbon described the Fellows of his College (Magdalen) as "decent easy men who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the Founder . . . . from the toil of reading or thinking or writing they had absolved their conscience." Gibbon's testimony is perhaps tainted; for he had a grudge against the 'dons'; but Adam Smith*—a Snell Exhibitioner of Balliol—has left a description of the state of University and Collegiate teaching which is hardly more flattering, while Hogg, in his life of Shelley, declared that "Oxford is a seat in which Learning sits very comfortably as in an easy chair, and sleeps so soundly that no one can wake her."

The available evidence "justifies on the whole the received opinion that this period is the Dark Age of academical history";† but that there was another side to the picture is indisputable. Great founders such as John Radcliffe, Charles Viner, and George Aldrich were not lacking; George I himself established the Regius

* *Wealth of Nations.* Bk. V, c. i, pt. iii. § 2. † G. C. Brodrick.

Profesorship of Modern History; John Wesley found no difficulty in arranging his time methodically; Dr. Johnson declared that "there are excellent rules of discipline in every college"; above all, there was a genuine religious revival which, originating in Oxford, did incalculable service to the country at large.

The Oxford movement of the Eighteenth century was two-sided. On the intellectual side the Deistic controversy was fought and won by men like Bishop Butler; on the emotional side the old bones were made to live by the leaders of the "Methodist" revival, the brothers Wesley and Charles Whitefield. It is impossible, within the limits of an introductory sketch, to appraise adequately the immensity of the debt which England incurred to Oxford in the persons of Bishop Butler and John Wesley. Imagine what the England of the later Eighteenth century had been, had the great industrial revolution, compelling the aggregation of the masses into towns—and the teaching of the French Revolution, bidding men throw restraint to the winds—come upon England without the preparatory mission of John Wesley. As Mr. S. R. Gardiner, writing of this time, has truly said: "The one word which expressed (to the clergy) all that was to be avoided was the word 'Zeal.' They were in the midst of masses who were mere heathens living lives utterly brutal and degraded, and they passed on their way as if these things had no existence. John Wesley saw the sight with other eyes. He gave his life to raise these very masses to a higher and a nobler life. There was in his teaching nothing new. It was the old Puritan doctrine of Conversion, upon which was grafted the practice of Confession from the yet older Church stripped of its sacerdotalism and assuming a democratic form in the class-meetings by means of which he organized his followers. In his hands the old thing had become new. His work was more than to teach and to organize. It

was to quicken into vigour the seeds of spiritual life which had been almost smothered under the oppressive reasoning of the philosopher and the careless self-content of the man of the world."

It may be that Mr. Lecky is right in denying to John Wesley a place "in the first line of the great religious creators and reformers," but the fact is indisputable that he and his work constitute the most important contribution to the national life of England made by Oxford in the Eighteenth century.

§ 9. THE REFORM MOVEMENTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

The history of Oxford in the Nineteenth century may be summarized in a sentence: it has been the restoration of the University to its true place and functions as a national institution. And this restoration was brought about mainly through three great Oxford movements:

(i) The Neo-Catholic or Tractarian movement—a movement which, though associated primarily with the names of ecclesiastics like Newman, Keble and Pusey, was far from being merely ecclesiastical;

(ii) The Social movement, particularly associated with such names as those of Thomas Hill Green and Arnold Toynbee; and

(iii) A movement for the extension of the influence of the University to all creeds and classes, partly by means of internal modifications and reforms, partly by means of external expansion.

During the first 400 years of its existence the University had been pre-eminently national, drawing its sons from every class if not from every creed: so 'national' indeed, if Antony Wood may be trusted (which is doubtful), that one in every twelve of the population

must have been a student at Oxford in the days of James I. But already the de-nationalizing process had begun. Under the Chancellorship of Leicester in 1581 was passed the first of a long series of 'test' Acts which ultimately reduced the national University to the condition of a close preserve of the Anglican Church. The University and the nation alike suffered, and the nadir was reached, as we have seen, in the Eighteenth century.

With the opening of the Nineteenth century things began rapidly to improve. Reform, long deferred owing to the hurricane of the French Revolution, but ultimately stimulated by it, was in the air:

> "And other spirits there are standing apart
> Upon the forehead of the age to come;
> These, these will give the world another heart,
> And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
> Of mighty workings?—
> Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb."

As in the State at large, so in its microcosm, a serious effort was made to put the 'house in order.' While the Imperial legislature was repealing Test Acts, admitting to full civil rights Roman Catholics and Nonconformists, abolishing slavery, amending the Poor Law, reforming the municipalities, and above all reforming itself, University reformers were not idle. Oriel College, under the wise government of men like Copleston, Denison, and Eveleigh, threw open its Fellowships in 1795, and so secured for itself a dominating influence inside the University and outside; Balliol threw open its Scholarships, and the modern Examination system, thanks to Dean Jackson and Provost Eveleigh, was instituted.

Then came the 'Oxford' or Tractarian movement. That movement had consequences far larger and wider than those anticipated by its ecclesiastical leaders. It not only communicated an immense impulse to the Anglican Church, but stimulated activity in many directions; it made the careless think and the sluggards

work; above all, it set forth a high ideal of personal conduct and civic responsibility. It was this awakening of the sense of civic responsibility which led men to ask how far the University was fulfilling its duties as intellectual trustee for the nation at large. It was no longer neglectful of its duties to the ruling classes. In rapid succession it gave to the nation four such rulers as Canning and Peel, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury; but its Degrees were still closed to the Dissenter, and for the sons of the poor it was doing more than is commonly thought, but not enough. Could it not do more?

The question first broached at Oxford was thrust home by Lord John Russell's Commission, appointed in 1850 to "enquire into the state, discipline, studies, and revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford."

The Report of the Commission (1852) taken together with the resulting legislation of 1854 may be said to mark the beginning of the modern history of Oxford. In the forefront of the report was an emphatic assertion of the national character of the University. "Such an institution cannot be regarded as a mere aggregation of private interests; it is eminently national. It would seem, therefore, to be a matter of public policy that enquiry should be made from time to time in order to ascertain whether the purposes of its existence are fulfilled; and that such measures should be taken as may serve to raise its efficiency to the highest point and to diffuse its benefits most widely." The intentions of the Commissioners have been in the main loyally fulfilled by the University. The institution of Non-Collegiate Students in 1867, and the permission freely given to undergraduates to reside in licensed lodgings, have done much, though not enough, to enable poorer students to come to the University; while for those who are still excluded, no longer by tests (since 1871), but by pre-occupation or by poverty

teaching has been provided beyond the geographical limits of the University.

So far back as 1850 Mr. Sewell, a Tutor of Exeter, propounded the following question: "Though it may be impossible to bring the masses requiring education to the University, may it not be possible to carry the University to them?" To Sewell's pregnant question an answer has been found in the great system of Local Examinations and Local Lectures, the latter popularly known as "University Extension." Thus, in the words of Sir Richard Jebb, "the ancient Universities are no longer content to be only in the strict sense of the phrase seats of learning; they now desire to be also mother cities of intellectual colonies, and to spread the influence of their teaching throughout the land." Oxford alone has planted in all parts of England some two hundred "intellectual colonies," in which the best traditions of Oxford teaching and Oxford influence are loyally maintained. This is truly fulfilling a national, perhaps an imperial, mission. But there is another imperial mission to which Oxford has lately been called.

Half a century ago Oxford was described by one of the most gifted of her sons as the "home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties." But Matthew Arnold, with all his loyalty to "the adorable dreamer whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages," was a typical representative of a period of pessimism. As a pessimist he looked not over fondly but too exclusively to the past. To another son of Oxford, not less devoted and more truly imaginative and inspired, has been vouchsafed a vision of the future which, thanks to his own beneficence, has already begun to take shape in practical realization. The name of Cecil Rhodes is one which in some connections is still provocative of controversy. But in Oxford at least we may think of him as a loyal son

whose soul was filled with a splendid vision. He was a devout believer in the Imperial mission of Great Britain, and he looked to his old University to become the nursing mother of an Imperial race. To the mother that he loved so well he brings to-day the chosen sons of the daughter lands, and he brings them in the hope and the belief that these Imperial scholars of an Imperial University may in their turn teach the lessons they have learned from the mother's lips to the daughter lands from which they come. It is a splendid vision, and an inspiring opportunity. But opportunities entail additional responsibilities. More fervently than ever must those who love their *Alma Mater* pray "that here true religion and sound learning may for ever flourish and abound," and that so she may never cease to send forth "a succession of persons duly qualified to serve God in Church and State"—and Empire.

SHORT LIST OF AUTHORITIES.

For further study of the topics touched in the foregoing pages the following, among others, will be found useful:

(i) As Text-books:

C. W. Boase: *Oxford* ("Historic Towns").
Cecil Headlam: *Oxford* ("Mediaeval Towns").
G. C. Brodrick: *University of Oxford* (Epochs of Church History).
Marshall: *Oxford* ("Diocesan Histories").
A. Lang: *Oxford.*
J. Wells: *Oxford and its Colleges.*

(ii) Larger Works and Works on Special Topics:

Rashdall: *Mediaeval Universities.*
Maxwell Lyte: *History of the University* (to the Reformation only.)
Clark (ed.): *The Colleges of Oxford* (by various writers).
College Histories (pub. Robinson, various writers).
Brewer (ed.): *Monumenta Franciscana* (Rolls Series).
Trevelyan: *Age of Wyclif.*
Poole: *Wyclif.*
G. H. Moberley: *William of Wykeham.*
A. O. Prickard: *New College.*
Anthony Wood: *Annals.*
H. L. Thompson: *St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford, in its relation to English History.*
E. S. Ffoulkes: *St. Mary's Church.*
T. J. Jackson: *St. Mary-the-Virgin.*
Macray: *Memorials of the Bodleian.*
Seebohm: *Oxford Reformers.*
Lupton: *Life of Colet.*
A. F. Pollard: *Cranmer.*
W. H. Hutton: *Laud.*
J. A. R. Marriott: *Life and Times of Falkland.*
Shorthouse: *John Inglesant.*
J. R. Green: *Oxford Studies* (chiefly 18th century).
Chr. Wordsworth: *Social Life at the Universities.*
Mozley: *Reminiscences.*
Church: *Oxford Movement.*
Liddon and Johnstone: *Life of Pusey.*
Wilfrid Ward: *W. G. Ward and the Oxford Movement.*
Lewis Campbell: *Nationalization of the old Universities.*
Mark Pattison: *Suggestions on Academical Organization.*

Many of the publications of the Oxford Historical Society are quite invaluable. Special reference may be made to:—Parker: *Early History;* Hurst: *Topography;* Little: *Grey Friars;* Magrath: *Flemings in Oxford;* Wigram: *Cartulary of St. Frideswide; Anthony Wood's Life* (ed. Clark); Brodrick: *Memorials of Merton;* Fowler: *History of C.C.C.;* Bloxam: *Magdalen College and James II;* and several volumes of *Collectanea.*

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